

## ABSTRACT

A tape drive (10) with a guide assembly (20) including a first roller (30) having a perimeter surface (56), a circumference (62), a longitudinal axis (50) and one or more of spaced apart, discontinuous grooves (32). The grooves (32) are disposed into the perimeter surface (56), with each groove (32) having a groove length (74) of less than the circumference (62) of the first roller (30), for venting air between a storage tape (26) and the first roller (30) in order to inhibit lateral tape motion and directional continuity shift. Further, the grooves (32) can be semi-randomly distributed over the perimeter surface (56), thereby decreasing the incidence of print through. Preferably, the grooves (32) of the first roller (30) are aligned substantially parallel to the circumference (62) of the first roller (30). With this design, the grooves (32) tend to inhibit the storage tape (26) from moving laterally, i.e. parallel to the longitudinal axis (50) of the first roller (30).